



## CARE's WorkLife Solutions

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# The Importance of Documentation

There's an old adage from Human Resource circles: 'If it isn't written, it doesn't exist.' This saying points to the need for clear, consistent documentation of events to ensure that an employee's job performance is being appropriately tracked by his/her supervisor. Here are some tips that might be able to assist you in documenting your employee's job performance.

- Your documentation should only document what you see, hear or smell, and that's it. Don't give any assumptions, guesses or explanations as to why something happened, just identify what happened.
- Make documentation easy. The harder it is to do, the less you are apt to do it. Is there a form you can use to simply 'check off' the behavior/event?
- Documentation should be for the long-term. Another HR adage addresses the long-term meaningfulness of your actions as a supervisor. The adage goes something like, 'Suppose you were hit by a bus tonight. Could someone pick up where you left off in your job tomorrow?' For that reason, documentation is critical to succession management.
- Without documentation, you cannot find a pattern. For supervisors who like to solve mysteries, here are three employee situations that, without proper documentation, may have gone 'unsolved.' Try to identify what life-management problems were behind these fictional employee problems:
  - An employee misses the first Monday of each month for four consecutive months.
  - An employee is 10 to 15 minutes tardy an average of three mornings a week every other week.
  - Production goals are not met for an entire department every other Friday morning.